

111TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. RES. 220

Urging Turkey to respect the rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 6, 2009

Mr. ROYCE (for himself, Ms. WATSON, and Mr. BILIRAKIS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## RESOLUTION

Urging Turkey to respect the rights and religious freedoms  
of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Whereas the Ecumenical Patriarchate is the spiritual home of  
the world's oldest and second largest Christian Church,  
adding to the rich cultural tapestry of Istanbul, Turkey;

Whereas Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is one of the  
world's preeminent spiritual leaders, representing ap-  
proximately 300,000,000 Orthodox Christians worldwide;

Whereas the United States Congress has bestowed the Con-  
gressional Gold Medal on Ecumenical Patriarch Bar-  
tholomew;

Whereas the entire world, other than Turkey, recognizes the  
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul as the Ecumeni-  
cal Patriarchate;

Whereas the 2,000-year-old Sacred See of the Ecumenical Patriarchate will disappear in the foreseeable future, unless Turkey changes its policies, as there are less than 2,500 Greek Orthodox citizens of Turkey, most of whom are elderly;

Whereas the disappearance of the See would mean the end of a crucial link between the Christian and the Muslim world since the continuing presence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey is a living testimony of religious coexistence since 1453;

Whereas the Ecumenical Patriarchate has a record of reaching out and working for peace and reconciliation amongst all faiths and has fostered dialogue among Christians, Jews, and Muslims;

Whereas in 1993, the European Union defined the membership criteria for accession to the European Union at the Copenhagen European Council, obligating candidate countries to have achieved certain levels of reform, including stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities;

Whereas the Turkish Constitution secures religious rights for all Turkish citizens;

Whereas the Government of Turkey has failed to recognize the Ecumenical Patriarchate's international status;

Whereas the Government of Turkey has limited to Turkish nationals the candidates available to the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church for selection as the Ecumenical Patriarchate and reneged on its agreement to reopen the Theological School at Halki, thus impeding training for the Orthodox clergy in Turkey; and

Whereas the Government of Turkey has confiscated without compensation significant quantities of property belonging to the Ecumenical Patriarchate properties and has punitively taxed the Balukili Hospital of Istanbul, which is operated by the Ecumenical Patriarchate: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2               (1) calls on Turkey to pledge to uphold and  
3       safeguard religious and human rights; and

4               (2) calls on Turkey to eliminate all forms of  
5       discrimination, particularly those based on race or  
6       religion, and immediately—

7               (A) grant the Ecumenical Patriarchate ap-  
8       propriate international recognition and eccle-  
9       siastic succession;

10              (B) grant the Ecumenical Patriarchate the  
11       right to train clergy of all nationalities, not just  
12       Turkish nationals; and

13              (C) respect the property rights of the Ecu-  
14       menical Patriarchate.

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